DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 130 307 CS 203 020

TITLE	Options in Education, Transcript for April 19, 1976: What History Textbooks Omit, Review of "Schooling in Capitalistic America," Liberal Parents/Radical Children, Catholic Education, Kitchen Experiments and "Sesame Street."
INSTITUTION	George Washington Univ., Washington, D.C. Inst. for Educational Leadership.; National Public Radio, Washington, D.C.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	76
NOTE	20p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Catholic Schools; *Education; Educational Television; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; History Textbooks; *Interviews; *News Reporting; Parent Child Relationship; Political Attitudes; *Radio; Scripts
IDENTIFIERS	Options in Education

ABSTRACT

"Options in Education" is a radio news program which focuses on issues and developments in education. This transcript contains discussions of things that history textbooks leave out; a review of "Schooling in Capitalistic America" by Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis; liberal parents and radical children--what happened in the 1960s; Catholic education; two monologues by poet Keith Gunderson; games and experiments, as well as recipes, for children in the kitchen; and "Sesame Street." Participants in the program include John Merrow and Wendy Blair, moderators; Howard Zinn; Donald Bigelow; Midge Decter; John Powers; Keith Gunderson; Sara Bonnett Stein; and Gerald Lesser. (JM)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED130307

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

TRANSCRIPT FOR PROGRAM SCHEDULED FOR BROADCAST

THE WEEK OF APRIL 19, 1976

National Public Radio

Options in Education

2025 M Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036
202-785-6462

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
J. Merrow
TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
WHAT HISTORY TEXTBOOKS LEAVE OUT w/Howard Zinn, Professor of History, Boston University	1-3
A BOOK REVIEW -- SCHOOLING IN CAPITALISTIC AMERICA by Samuel Bowles & Herbert Gintis. Reviewed by Dr. Donald Bigelow	4-5
LIBERAL PARENTS/RADICAL CHILDREN -- Midge Decter discusses some of her ideas about what happened to kids & parents during the 60's.	6-8
DO PATENT LEATHER SHOES REALLY REFLECT UP? -- Author John Powers reflects on his Catholic boyhood & education.	8-11
TWO MONOLOGUES -- POET KEITH GUNDERSON	
"When The Lights Go On Again All Over The World"	11
"Milk"	14-15
THE KIDS KITCHEN TAKEOVER -- Author Sara Bonnett Stein describes exciting experiments in the kitchen for kids & parents.	12-14
BEHIND THE BLACKBOARD AT SESAME STREET -- Gerald Lesser, Chairman of the Board of Advisors of the Children's Television Workshop discusses television's "Sesame Street"	15-17

CS 203 020

"Copyright © 1976 by National Public Radio & the Institute for Educational Leadership."

(OPENING MUSICAL THEME)

BLAIR: I'm Wendy Blair with NPR's OPTIONS IN EDUCATION.

OPTIONS IN EDUCATION is a news magazine about all the issues and developments in education -- from the ABC's of primary education to the alphabet soup of government programs. If you've ever been to school, we have something that will interest you.

MERROW: I'm John Merrow. On this edition of OPTIONS IN EDUCATION some lessons in history - by way of a radical overview, a personal appraisal, and a bit of poetic whimsy.

BLAIR: Howard Zinn wants teachers to take a new approach to history. . .

ZINN: It should be taught with disrespect for leaders, disrepect for heads of government. It should be taught with a proper, realistic view of the Founding Fathers.

MERROW: Author Midge Decter dispells some illusions. . .

DECTER: I think there was an enormous misunderstanding of what was going on in the 1960's. They were not rebellious. In fact, they were being very obedient. That's the big joke, and the joke is on them.

BLAIR: Poet Keith Gunderson remembers his childhood . . .

GUNDERSON: When I got to kindergarten, I had a little speech defect - because if I said "wolf" or "roof" or woof" it always sounded like "woof, and woof, and woof".

("Lyndon Johnson Told the Nation" , Tom Paxton)

BLAIR: Protest music, such as this, is a kind of shorthand way of getting at passionate debates about current history, and some historians call for a similar treatment in the classroom. They would have history texts re-written more accurately; to tell the story of women and ethnic groups, for example -- because without this information, the whole truth is evaded.

John Merrow spoke to a revisionist historian, Howard Zinn, at a recent conference in Boston. Zinn, a Professor of History at Boston University, tells John that too much has been left out of our history books.

ZINN: I think what's omitted in the history that's taught is any notion that there's some kind of scheme or structure or persistence or explainability to events like the Vietnam War and Watergate. What we get, instead, is a presentation of something as cataclysmic as the War as a set of accidents or aberrations, something that just happens to come out because of mistakes, errors of individual presidents.

And the result of this is to leave people without any notion as to deep-rooted structural causes of things like the War in Vietnam. Specifically, what is left out in the discussion of the War in Vietnam is the fact that there was a certain persistence, a history persistence in our policy through the whole post-War period. And that historic persistence can't be explained as simply indiviuual error, psychic aberration. It has to be explained by something very fundamental in American society. I think the Vietnam War can be explained as part of something which has been true ever since World War II, and that is the growth of the American economic empire, the birth of American economic interest abroad. You know, the percentage of world investment,

foreign investments held by American corporations rose from the end of World War I from 6% to, in 1960, 60%. The American "empire" - without making a fetish of corporate involvement - but stressing it as one critical factor. That and the American control of the military affairs in other countries, our training of the military and police officials, and intelligence officials, in other countries -- all this creates this kind of structure which has existed for some time, and which explains not just the Vietnam War, but the general pattern of an aggressive American foreign policy in the world.

MERROW: Now, you say those things are omitted, and that they are persistently omitted. You might be able to develop an interesting theory of history, of the teaching of history. It might go something like this: We'll allow a few persistent pests like Howard Zinn, but we won't as long as there aren't too many of them.

ZINN: You're perfectly right. And it's part of the wonderfully sophisticated American method of control - and that's, to allow some avenues of protest - some openings for critics - and one I. F. Stone, one Bella Abzug, a few radicals in the academies, and it's a marvelous way of control.

Now, the answer to that is not to absent ourselves in order to have zero elements of dissidence. The answer to that is to try to multiply ourselves, which is what I'm trying to do.

MERROW: You talk about how in history, in the teaching of history, students develop a political sense without a historical sense, or a historical sense without any sense of the immediate.

ZINN: By a political sense without a historical sense, I mean that there's a tendency to look at events as if they just happened, as if they were just born, as if there is no historical background to them. And, so, very often you can see it in the way schools divide subjects. There's a field called political science - or sometimes it's called civic affairs, or contemporary events. And there's another field called history. And in contemporary events, you study the contemporary events, but you don't go back - when you're studying the Vietnam War - to the Mexican War, or back to the Louisiana Purchase, or the Indian Wars, and, therefore, you're deprived of the opportunity to see the Vietnam War as the culmination of a very long period of American continental and global expansion.

On the other hand, in history courses you start with Egypt and you end up with Franklyn D. Roosevelt. So, you have this long historic stretch, and you stop just short of the critical issues of today.

MERROW: Okay. That's strong criticism, and maybe sound criticism. But - How should history be taught in the schools? Or maybe not in the schools. Let's bring up the "Adams Chronicles" and "Upstairs/Downstairs" and all those things, too.

ZINN: History should be taught with disrespect for leaders, disrespect for heads of government. It should be taught with a proper, realistic view of the Founding Fathers - as slaveholders, as merchants, as manufacturers, as people who had interests of economic and political control. It should be taught with a proper criticism of Jackson - as an Indian-hater and slaveholder, and not as a precursor of the benevolent Roosevelt. It should be taught with a proper criticism of all of our expansionist presidents, and all of our presidents who have perpetuated the policies of keeping the wealth of the country monopolized in a few hands, and destroying Indians, and maintaining racism -- that kind of

disrespect for leaders, it seems to me, is an essential part of teaching in a democracy. Democracy means nothing if it does not mean looking upon your leaders as people who are subject to criticism on the basis of whether they fulfilled the goals set in the Declaration of Independence - "of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

The other thing that needs to be done in history and can be done in history is to tell people more and more about the possibilities that people have who are not in power - which means most of us. The possibilities people have for organizing, for getting together, for becoming resistance movements to war, for becoming economic movements against the utilities or against the corporations -- tell more about the history of the Labor Movement. Instead of telling the "Adams Chronicles" - tell the Eugene Debbs Chronicles, the Big Bill Haywood Chronicles, the Mother Jones Chronicles. Why don't we have TV specials about these dissidents who are very inspiring? Much more inspiring than this elegant conservative, Adams, who belongs to another age, and who's trundled before us, I believe, to enhance the presidency which has been so demeaned that it needs somehow to be given now the grace of Adams to restore our confidence in it.

MERROW: Is there room in the way you suggest that history should be taught - is there room for respect for this country, for the things that this country does well, for the freedoms we have?

ZINN: Respect for the ideals that we have. Not respect for the reality that has fallen far short of the ideals. Respect for some of the things that have been won by people, but recognition of how limited what has been won. Respect for those people who fought for these ideals, but not respect for those leaders who have enshrined what turns out to be the miniscule realization of those ideals that were presented by Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence. And we may have a key to the whole problem -- something important -- I believe there's a constant confusion of respect for our values and our goals - with respect for the leaders who are in charge of the country.

MERROW: Do you expect it to happen in the schools? If, for example, it's true that the academies are the scribblers for the status quo.

ZINN: They are. Do I expect it to happen? No. I hardly expect anything. (laughter) But I think it's possible. In fact, one of the things to me that's important about history is to at least show that things are possible, and to show that surprises are possible in history. In fact, I see signs that public school teachers are being somewhat more critical, somewhat more bold, somewhat more innovative than they have been in the past. It's only the beginning, but I think it could grow, and I think this is the time for it to grow because Vietnam & Watergate was such a profound shock to the American people that we have the possibility now to move into areas and begin to teach in different ways.

If those millions of people who are affected by Vietnam & Watergate were now to begin to have some affect in the public schools as teachers, as parents, I think we could see remarkable changes in the next generation.

BLAIR: Professor Howard Zinn of Boston University.

MAE WEST ON EDUCATION

MAE WEST: Why is education the great thing? I don't know what I'd do without mine. Now, history is a very fascinating study. In fact, it's my favorite reading. Oh, ah -- What's your name?

BOY: Lem.

MAE WEST: Lem, tell me what do you know about Cleopatra?

BOY: Gosh, teacher, I ain't seen her.

MAE WEST: Of course, you ain't. Because she's a hysterical character. She lived way back in the early times. And what a time she had. She used to fool around with snakes.

BOY: You mean rattlesnakes?

MAE WEST: Ah - These snakes didn't rattle. They crooned. She was the Queen of Egypt.

BOY: I seen Little Egypt once.

MAE WEST: They ain't related. Sit down.

A BOOK REVIEW

BLAIR: Mae West taught history in an unusual and not terribly accurate way. And serious critics of disciplines like history and economics charge that there are too many inaccuracies in our textbooks. A new book by two Marxist Economists, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, picks up on this theme. Their book, Schooling in Capitalistic America, tells us that no amount of piecemeal educational reform can cure this country's ills.

Educational reformers since John Stewart Mill have argued that education is "the great equalizer of social and economic disparties." Bowles and Gintis disagree with Mill's proposition. Their primary thesis is that education is the servant of the economic system -- conditioning the population to maintain the status quo.

Here's Book Reviewer Dr. Donald Bigelow:

BIGELOW: It's $14 worth of Schooling in Capitalistic America - and, believe me, you've got to belong to the capitalistic society to buy it. And I'm thankful for the opportunity to review it at no cost. It's by two young men who are economists named Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, and it's really a very exciting book.

And it has a lot to do with radical economics. Let me read what they put in their preface, in which they're very clear about it. The authors indicate that they owe a great debt to radical economists around the United States and to, what they call, our organization, the Union for Radical Political Economics. (The Ford Foundation, by the way, supported it - so one wonders how ambitious the Ford Foundation is getting, or how radical the economics are, but in any case, they've written a book which would scare the hell out of anybody, but they're asking the right questions, John.) The beautiful part of it is that they're saying -- Let's quit the band-aids. Let's look at the big problems. "We cannot move forward," they say, "through the band-aid remedies of liberal educational reform. The people of the United States

do not need a doctor for the moribund capitalistic order. We need an undertaker. Nor can the political challenge facing us be met through the spontaneous efforts of individuals or groups working in isolation. The development and articulation of the vision of a socialistic alternative, as much as the ability to meet today's concrete human needs, requires a mass-based party, able to aid in the daily struggles of working people throughout the United States and committed to a revolutionary transformation of the U.S. economy."

And that, really, you know, kind of says it. Now, you could say -- "Marx, radical, communist." But I don't think so. At least for me, without buying into what they're saying - I'm buying into their approach, and their approach is: Let's ask the big questions. These two men have put together a very nice thesis, and while as I say I'm not wholely sure I'm going to apply their thesis, I'm going to ask their questions, and I like to ask their questions.

In a sense, they begin their book so nicely. They get it right out right out front. "Go West, young man," advised Horace Greeley in 1851. A century later, he might have said, "Go to college." But the college has been like the frontier -- a place in which you could retreat presumably while growing. Now, while staking a claim of some sort - they're looking at the sum of the educational experience (school & college - including community and junior college), and they're saying it's no longer the frontier, and we've tried lots of things to clean it up and reform it, and they don't work because we don't get at the basic thing.

Education, they say, over the years has never been a potent force for economic equality. We've failed to give economic equality, they say, among the reformers, and so now it's time to get economic opportunity in other ways.

MERROW: Don, you raised a question about how radical their economics were. Their economics were much too radical for Harvard. They were immensely popular, and they were pushed away from Harvard, and the most popular course they taught was canceled. It was a fairly controversial event a couple of years ago.

BIGELOW: Well, that's more the reason to buy the book, then -- because if people can't have free speech to say this to intelligent people, then intelligent people have got to be able to look at it. They don't have to buy it, but they've got to begin to ask the big question -- Not did we fail in all of our efforts, but why didn't we succeed so that something different is happening.

BLAIR: Dr. Donald Bigelow talking with John Merrow about Schooling in Capitalistic America, a new book by Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis.

("THE AGE OF AQUARIUS" - from "HAIR")

MERROW: That song from the rock-musical "Hair" celebrates the youth movement of the 1960's. We may be too close to that time to understand the full impact of its upheaval and political and social values, but that period has already provided rich material for writers and commentators.

LIBERAL PARENTS/RADICAL CHILDREN

DECTER: The liberal parents are those of us who set out to have our families right after World War II. And, consequently, who were the producers of the famous post-War baby-boom. And the radical children are the famous young of the 1960's, about whom it is no secret that they are the children of the liberal parents.

MERROW: Midge Decter has made up her mind about the activities of the Sixties. Her analysis hinges on the relationship between liberal parents and radical children. Midge Decter spoke with Susan Lieberman of Station WAMU in Washington, D. C.

DECTER: You know, in the 1960's there were people called the "young". We heard about them all the time. The "young" are briiliant. The "young" are idealistic. The "young" will not suffer this -- the "young" hate the War. The "young" will not tolerate a society in which these terrible things go on. The "young" are not ambitious for material goods . . . . and so on.

They were called the "young" - but they were not everybody who was of a particular age. They weren't everybody in the United States from 15 to 25. They were the members of this particular class.

LIEBERMAN: How is this generation of children, though, different from others who have defied family traditions to become a new breed, so to speak?

DECTER: Well, for one thing I think they are different from other generations in that they did not defy family traditions. I think there was an enormous misunderstanding of what was going on in the 1960's. They were not rebellious. They were not rebelling against the standards and values of their parents - though they claimed they were. In fact, they were being very obedient. That's the big joke. And the joke is on them. They were very obedient.

The idea that one had to be superior to the pursuit for material goods was an idea that these children learned in their homes. This is a very, very important point. The liberal parents - although many of them certainly did end up extremely affluent - were not people who were pursuing materialist values. They had many goods, and they were living better than they ever anticipated, but all the while they were really putting down these material values, and certainly were putting them down as far as their children were concerned -- because you were supposed to have both. You were supposed to have all this wonderful wealth. The children were not now going to have to work for it - because, to work for it, as everybody knows, is demeaning and grubby. And the children were not going to have to work for it, and they were going to be freed and released to be wonderful and spiritual and to write poems, and to think high thoughts. But no one ever told them that it's difficult to do anything you want to do. They were never told it was difficult, and they were never told that the true satisfaction in life comes from mastering a discipline. They were never told any of those things - because their parents that they, the parents, were creating a new kind of world, in which all those dreary old boring grubby ideas wouldn't have to be obtained anymore.

LIEBERMAN: Let's go back to the parents for a minute. Where do they come from? I mean, why in their own development do they come to a point where they do not value what they themselves experienced?

DECTER: The liberal parents were, as a whole generation, better educated than any that had come before them. And to be well educated in the second half of the 20th Century means to be familiar with all the terms of modernist culture. And the terms of modernist culture are that "bourgeois society is inferior." It is terrible. It has a very bad quality. It leads to vulgarity of every kind - and so on. And this generation, being so widely educated, took on this attitude - perhaps without even being aware that it had such an attitude, and inculcated it into the children.

In fact, if you add up all the attitudes that they put together, they were full of contradictions - as people are, but especially people who are caught up with a particularly big ambition, which they had for their children. So, they're full of contradictions. "We were not, on the one hand, going to press the children to achieve, as we had been pressed. On the other hand, we were certainly going to bring them up to expect the best of everything." They were in fact brought up a little bit like an aristocracy, and how we were going to put these two things together, I don't think we actually faced that issue - because I think we weren't altogether conscious of all the things that we were communicating to them.

LIEBERMAN: Describe in a little bit of detail the four case studies that you do in the book.

DECTER: Essentially, the book is four abstract portraits. I call it fictionalized-sociology. I wanted to tell the story of exactly how, in my imagination, these conditions came to be; how parents felt, and what parents thought, and how the kids felt, and responded. But it's not any particular character. The characters are generalized. They're kind of composite portraits of a type. I thought of the four experiences that seem to me get at the leading issues. So, I did a portrait of someone who drops out of school, who is a brilliant student. Another is of a lively young girl who begins to smoke pot, and discovers that she can't get through the day without a hefty supply of pot. Another is a young girl who is released by her mother and father to be sexually free at a very early age, who ends up joining a women's commune. And, then, the last is a young man who is very idealistic and gentle and noncompetitive and who goes off to live in a commune, and discovers that he can't bear the responsibility - even for the human relations that he has to create in this commune - let alone for his share of the work.

LIEBERMAN: And how did you come to find the experiences and behaviors that you described? Did you read any studies, for instance, that have been done on kids who have had these problems? Or are these the children of friends you know, and the friends you know?

DECTER: Well, they are a bit of everything. They are the children of friends, and friends, and friends-of-friends, and stories I've heard. A lot of things I've read have come into this - not so much studies, as things the young themselves were writing in the 1960's, which were often extremely revealing - though not necessarily revealing what the author thought they were revealing of. I think a terrible thing was done to the young in the 1960's, really terrible. I think the terrible thing was done more by the culture and the society and the universities - more than by the parents, who were tangled up, and struggling.

The terrible thing was that there was this generation which was getting into very bad shape - physical shape even. Languishing, seeming depleted of energy, with an extraordinary rate of suicidal feelings, and, indeed, an extraordinary rate of suicide itself among them. And all the while that they were collapsing under everybody's nose, there was this terrific publicity campaign going on, saying,

"They're really wonderful. They are marvelous. They're in great shape. They've just found a new way to live. They created this wonderful alternative lifestyle - people like Charles Reich, who talked about "The Greening of America", who lived there at Yale with these young people, and decided to celebrate everything they did. If one was a parent in those years, as I was, and I think this is probably true of all parents -- there were feelings that were sort of a cross between desperation (that something was going wrong, and everybody was saying something else -- it was as if there was a conspiracy to ignore the fact that anything was going wrong) -- so there was that desperation on the one side, and there was a kind of fear and shame, and, maybe, "I'm crazy" feeling on the other side, which is all too easy to play upon when it comes by parents -- and if the whole world is saying that it's perfectly marvelous that your kids - and that the kids of your friends - are all carrying on in the way they are, then you think well, maybe, you are a neandrathal or some kind of horrible, right-wing fascist or something for being worried about this.

And, so, I think we were all afraid to speak up then. And, also, we were bewildered about what it was we were to speak up to or for our about.

LIEBERMAN: What advice can you give to parents who are raising children now, who I think have some of the values and ideas that you described of the generation you were describing in your book?

DECTER: The advice I would give to young parents is -- Be yourself! Stand on your experience, and be straightforward with your children. It seems to me that the most important thing to remember is that it's not the purpose of a parent to make children happy. It's the children's responsibility to make themselves happy. And if you stop fussing about the idea that you will make your children unhappy, I think you will have a far better time of it.

JOHN MERROW: Midge Decter, author of Liberal Parents/Radical Children, talking with Susan Lieberman here in Washington.

("KIDS" from "BYE, BYE, BIRDIE")

BLAIR: Parents have always had a million tricks to make children behave - cajoling and coaxing them into acceptable behavior. But unless you went to a parochial school, you might not recognize the trick referred to in the title of a new book, Do Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up? Author John Powers reminisces about his Catholic boyhood with Paul Richertboe of Station KCUR in Kansas City.

POWERS: Well, when Catholic girls get to high school, at one time or another the nuns tell them what life is really all about. And, basically, the nuns give them, if you want to call it that, sex instruction, and they tell the girls certain things - such as, "Do not wear pearls because they reflect down. Do not wear black, patent leather shoes because they reflect up. Don't go to a restaurant with white tablecloths because that reminds boys of bed. And never dance closer than a telephone book away." So, the title, Do Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?, for many people who have gone to parochial high schools pretty much sums up the mentality of that particular era.

RICHERTBOE: Was Catholic education really a bad experience?

POWERS: No. I didn't enjoy going to a Catholic school. I didn't enjoy going to SCHOOL! I did not like being a child; being small has absolutely no advantages that I can think of. This idea of blissful childhood is a pile of garbage. And I just happened to go to a Catholic school. And the reason I wrote a book about going to a Catholic school - two of 'em - because, basically, as far as I could tell no one else before had written books about the experience, at least, in an honest way. Many books are written by Catholics or ex-Catholics about Catholic schools - but they're "grudge" books, out to defend a particular point of view, or propaganda. And my book, I don't think is either. It simply states how that particular way of life was at the time.

Characters that I think everyone runs into at one time or another - such as, Coach Venutti, our high school football coach who believed that anything could be cured by tape. If you had a heart attack, he'd try to cure it with a roll of tape. Felix the Filthy Lender. Felix, as you know, was a sex expert. He had enough dirt in his head to apply for statehood. I think everyone knows a Felix Lender.

RICHERTBOE: Can you explain some of the peculiar things about being taught by a religious order, nuns in grade school, priests and brothers in high school, which you really don't run into in a public school?

POWERS: Well, there's a major difference in terms of attitude between Catholic and public school - because you always heard at the Catholic school that if you didn't like it, you could always go to the public school where "they had to take you". In Catholic schools they had a much stricter discipline code. They had a dress code. In my high school, you always had to wear a sportcoat, tie and a belt. And, of course, the joke was someday a kid would come with nothing on but a sportcoat, tie and belt.

I think it also created a feeling of everyone was in the same family. Even ex-Catholics, I think -- a friend of mine who is an ex-Catholic, who was involved in an auto accident, and insisted that he be taken to a Catholic hospital because he felt more at home at the Catholic hospital, and I think that when you go to a Catholic school or a Baptist school or Lutheran School, whatever, and you are a member of that religious sect, it's more like one, big family. You note that I didn't say one, big, "happy" family. But it is <u>one</u> family. You share a common attitude toward life, normally, and you look at life in terms of "us & them". Not necessarily in an antagonistic way, but definitely, a realization that you're not "them".

RICHERTBOE: Do you think your Catholic education left you with any handicaps when you got out of high school and into the "real" world?

POWERS: Not at all. I think because Catholic education, Catholic schools have as many nuts in their schools as the world in general has outside.

RICHERTBOE: The characters - in particular the teachers - in both books - when I was going to school, and we're approximately the same age, the nuns and the priests and brothers were sort of sacrosanct. You really weren't supposed to say anything critical about them. What kind of reaction have you had from some of the clergy-people about this book you've written?

POWERS: Well, I did say some negative things about them, and I've gotten a very small amount of flack, oddly enough. And the type of flack I got was interesting. They didn't say, "Why did you lie?" But, "Why did you say it?" In other words, they all knew it, but they

didn't think that it should be stated publicly. I've gotten much more reaction from other people who said, "It's about time someone said it!" And I think a lot of non-Catholics, which is a rather poor label to use, but let's say "publics" had this image of a nun as she appeared in a Bing Crosby movie, and I think most Catholics, when they're honest with themselves, realize that that was not quite the way life really was.

With nuns, of course, as with any group of people, you have some very good ones. A lot of average ones. And some real savages. And I simply pointed that out.

RICHERTBOE: Are there particular things about Catholic education that you look back on and value?

POWERS: Yeah. I'd say the major thing I value is the discipline, the sense of discipline that I learned. This is what I learned. When people ask me, "How does Catholic education affect the student?" That's impossible to say. It depends to a great degree on the students.

One thing that I would like to mention that it basically is a humorous book. Sometimes people - especially with the first book, Last Catholic in America - say, "It sounds like a heavy book." It's not. It's basically humor taking, hopefully, a realistic view of the Catholic experience.

RICHERTBOE: There are some uniquely Catholic experiences in both the books. Can you talk about what a retreat is? In particular, two stories you described in your book -- that you were told they were retreats over and over again.

POWERS: Basically, a retreat is a three-day ritual, a religious practice of mass, lectures, sermons, whatever. And, normally, a Catholic school goes on retreat for three days out of the year. Instead of having regular schooldays, you have retreat. And at the retreat, you basically hear the same monologues over and over again from the priests who are conducting the retreats. That is, you'll hear a monologue in 7th grade, and in your junior year of high school you'll hear the same one.

One of the more popular monologues was the "Dirty Pictures In Your Wallet" monologue. And, basically, the priest would start out by telling how this kid named Jimmy Jones was a great kid, loved his parents, worked hard in school, treated his little sister like a human being. He was a perfect fellow except for the fact that he kept dirty pictures in his wallet. And, one day, Jimmy Jones is stepping off the curb, and a car comes by and runs him over, and breaks his both his arms, both his legs, crushes his head, cracks his pelvis, but the biggest problem he has is that he has these dirty pictures in his wallet.

And, so, the priest would ask us if we could just imagine the embarrassment that Jimmy Jones was going to feel when his parents came to the hospital and discovered these dirty pictures. And the priest would always point out to us that even if Jimmy Jones was lucky enough to die, he would still not have avoided the embarrassment of dirty pictures because it was not the type of thing you could skip in an eulogy.

Well, the only kid we had around who kept dirty pictures in his wallet was Felix Lender. And in junior year after hearing this monologue, Felix Lender went home, and he wrote a letter. The letter

said, "Dear Arthur, I found these dirty pictures in the science book you lent me this morning. I think they are disgusting." And he took the letter and stuck it in his wallet along with the pictures. Sort of guilt insurance, if you will.

BLAIR: John Powers talking about his book, Do Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?

MERROW: Wendy and I are tempted to tell you some stories about our own schooldays, but that's a tough act to follow.

BLAIR: Although Poet Keith Gunderson has a good one about World War II, which, I might add, is just a bit before my time.

GUNDERSON: Sometimes while the War was going on, there'd be air raid drills at night, which meant sirens, and everyone in Minneapolis turning out all their lights, and no lights anywhere except for the search lights, and it was real scarey, and we all hated hearing the sirens, which were worst sounding than ambulances.

And our teacher, Miss Bergstrom, told us how lucky we were to be allowed to turn on our lights at all, and how kids in London couldn't because they were going through true air raids with bombs falling, and homes and buildings being destroyed, and lives lost. And we should pray to God and thank him for making our air raids just drills. And somebody wrote a famous song about turning lights on, and it became #1 on the Hit Parade, and was called, "When the Lights Go On Again All Over the World". And it started out . . .

"When the lights go on again all over the world, and the boys come home again all the over the world . . ." And Miss Bergstrom decided for our class to choose it for our contribution to the Glen Dale Grade School Patriotism Day Auditorium.

So, everyone in the class had to learn it, but most of us knew most of the words anyway because we all listened to the Hit Parade every Saturday night. And the way Miss Bergstrom decided we should do the song was for everyone to hold up their hands and wiggle their fingers fast whenever we came to the words, "Lights go on again . . . " (Laughter) And Stanley asked why she wanted us to do that, and Miss Bergstrom gave Stanley a sort of fishy smile, and asked if anyone in class could tell Stanley why she wanted us to do that.

And Caroline Kingfisher raised her hand and said she could tell Stanley why, and told him that, "All the wiggling fingers look like a lot of lights blinking." And Stanley said, "Oh." And wiggled his fingers in front of his face, and stared and wiggled them again, and wrinkled his nose and didn't say anything anymore. And me and Ronny tried hard not to look at each other, but it didn't work. (laughter) And Ronny got thrown out in the hall for loud giggling. Though after a while he was let back in to add a couple of lights to the song.

And even though we were both against the Axis powers we had a hard time not giggling and biting our lips and faking coughing whenever the words, "Lights go on again . . ." rolled around. And those words came up a lot, but we usually managed to get our fingers wiggling like crazy - though sometimes we'd wiggle them real slow, and pretend we were going to strangle the person in front of us. And Miss Bergstrom usually spotted slow wiggling and would say, "Faster, Ronny. Faster, Keith. That's it. That's it." And when I got home from our first practice, I wiggled my fingers at my mom, and asked her if she knew what it was, and she said, "It looks like you're wiggling your fingers." I said, "No. It's the . . 'Lights go on again all over the world . . .'" And flopped in the big chair laughing my brains out.

THE KIDS KITCHEN TAKEOVER

MERROW: While we've got you in the mood for some fun, how about getting together in the kitchen for some games with pots and pans, eggs and cooking oil? Sara Bonnett Stein thinks that this is such a good idea that she wrote a book about it, called The Kids Kitchen Takeover. She shares her ideas with NPR's Susan Stamberg.

STAMBERG: I love this book you've written.

STEIN: Oh, well, thank you very much.

STAMBERG: You're welcome. It's called The Kids Kitchen Takeover. And it's given my six year old and I some of the most marvelous hours together that we've spent in an awfully long time. Your sub-title is -- How To Mess Around, Cook Up A Storm, And Start Your Own Bread Business, Too . . . over 120 things to cook, make, grow, and do, in and out of the kitchen. What sorts of ages are you aiming at here? My six-year old loves it. Is he the youngest one who can enjoy it? Or are there younger ones?

STEIN: Oh, I think there are lots of things in there that a three-year old could enjoy.

STAMBERG: And what's the upper limit?

STEIN: Well, my 16-year old is still doing some of the things in there.

STAMBERG: And I'm 37, and I'm having a ball!

STEIN: And some of it's legitimate adult cooking.

STAMBERG: Yeah, that's right. Recipes for cookies and dips.

STEIN: And the bread.

STAMBERG: And taffy-pulling, too. Do you need a lot of fancy equipment to do these things?

STEIN: There's no fancy equipment anywhere in the book.

STAMBERG: It's just what? Strictly ordinary, everyday things you find?

STEIN: Absolutely. Everyday household objects are things from the garage, the tool box.

STAMBERG: One of the most magical experiments, one that worked awfully well with our six-year old was the color bomb. Now, first of all, it strikes me that that's the most wonderful title for a kid. Any six-year old is going to love to know what a bomb is about.

STEIN: The children made up the title.

STAMBERG: You had your own kids working with you on this book?

STEIN: Oh, a lot of it came from things that they had done in the kitchen that didn't come out of other books.

STAMBERG: Now, describe this color bomb for us.

STEIN: Well, you know how vegetable dye comes in little tiny squirt bottles these days? And children love them. They love the tiny bottles they make so you can just get a drop of the color out at a time. You

just take a glass and fill it with water, and put in a drop at a time of vegetable die, and I guess the die must be somewhat more dense than the water, but it drops and seems to explode in bursts of colors and streamers that twist and curl around. And you can add one drop at a time, or you can begin to add other colors, and it's absolutely beautiful.

STAMBERG: Really, the two of us just sat with our noses . . . .

STEIN: Just staring, gazing . . .

STAMBERG: And both of us going, "Oh, look at it. Isn't that gorgeous?" And it was really just like a rainbow, and it changed from a rainbow to a sunset to . . .

STEIN: Oh, it's absolutely beautiful. Truly so. And it's extremely simple. Certainly a three year old can do that. A two year old can do that.

STAMBERG: In fact, you include in the book almost in an embarrassed way, right? You say it's so simple you're rather embarrassed to even write about it. But thank you so much for overcoming your embarrassment because it's a super experiment.

Another one that went over awfully well in our house was orange teeth!

STEIN: Ohhh. That's an ancient one. I don't know where that came from. I did that as a child. You just take the segment from a piece of orange, and eat the orange out of it, and cut the teeth shape into it, and wear it inside out inside your lips.

STAMBERG: And you look grotesque. You look just absolutely horrible. (Laughter) And terrify everybody.

STEIN: And almost every child - the minute they put it into their mouth - also crosses their eyes.

STAMBERG: (laughter) Yes, that's right. And you also have some wonderful photographs in the book of gangs of kids crossing their eyes with hideous orange teeth.

STEIN: And one tiny little girl who couldn't manage to hold it in her mouth . . . sort of hanging out.

STAMBERG: I noticed that in the course of the different recipes and experiments you're not really targetting it for ages that a given thing might be more appropriate to.

STEIN: I don't like to do that. That was on purpose.

STAMBERG: How come?

STEIN: Because there are some children of four that really are competent to do things even with a stove, and certainly with knives. And there are some children of six who aren't responsible enough to be able to do it, and I feel that the parents have to judge that for themselves.

STAMBERG: It may not just be a question of responsibility as much as simple coordination.

STEIN: Or lack of experience. I wanted to have a more delicatessan kind of book where people could pick and choose what appealed to them.

STAMBERG: Let's end with your describing the experiment that you have never dared to watch - even though you've written about it in your book.

STEIN: Well, we called it "Zap!" And it's a whole series of things piled on top of another on the kitchen counter. It's a pie plate, a glass, and a kitchen match box, and on top of the whole thing is a raw egg.

STAMBERG: Oh, no!

STEIN: Just balanced there. And you take a broom next to the counter, and you stand on the brush part of the broom, pull the handle back, aim it at the pie plate, which is in the middle of this whole balancing act, and let go!

STAMBERG: Oh, no! What's supposed to happen?

STEIN: What's supposed to happen is that the pie plate shoots out, the match box shoots out, and the egg drops safely into the glass of water that's at the bottom that holds the whole stack, and it doesn't break.

STAMBERG: I don't believe that for a minute.

STEIN: It's true.

STAMBERG: Your kids tell you it's true. You haven't seen it with your own eyes.

STEIN: They re-tested after the book was published - just to be sure it worked.

STAMBERG: That's wonderful. Sara, thank you so much. It was a pleasure to read the book, and it was a pleasure to talk with you.

BLAIR: Sara Bonnett Stein, author of The Kids Kitchen Takeover. She and Susan never said if you can do such tricks with milk, but if they'd had, Poet Keith Gunderson would not join in. It's a short tale which goes like this:

MILK

GUNDERSON: I drank milk out of a bottle with a nipple on it until I was more than three years old, and that was the only way I would drink milk because I fell in love with my bottle and nipple. And even when there wasn't any milk in it, I would carry it around like other kids carried their pacifiers and blankets. And once I lost my bottle and nipple in a big snow bank during a storm, and my dad made loud words at me, but walked carefully back and forth through the storm until he found my bottle and nipple. (laughter)

And I was never without them at my side. But one day when I was happy - just sucking in milk - my nipple fell off the bottle, and milk attacked my face. (laughter) And made me scream and choke and cry, and that was the end of milk for me. No more milk, never again, you could never know what it was going to do to you. (laughter)

And I didn't blame my bottle and nipple, and still liked them, but I never forgave milk. And when I got to kindergarten I had a little speech defect because if I said "wolf" or "roof" or "woof", it always sounded like "woof" and "woof" and "woof". So, one day

each week I would go to a special class and work on my "r's" and "l's" and "w's", and was starting to get them right so they almost sounded different from each other.

But one day the special class speech teacher announced to us that the first one that worked out his problem would be awarded a great big glass of ice-cold milk, which made me very scared because I'd almost worked out my problem. (laughter) Which meant that a great big glass of ice-cold milk would be coming at me soon.

So, I went back to "woof" and "woof" and "woof". (laughter) And the special class speech teacher said I should listen more closely because I had been doing very well. But I had been listening more closely and could tell when someone was in kahoots with milk.

("SESAME STREET THEME")

BLAIR: There's a good deal more to Sesame Street than engaging characters and lively action. The program has a very serious aim of improving the pre-school years so that viewers will be ready for more formal training in school, and, apparently, it's working.

Research has indicated that children who watch Sesame Street - whether they are middle class or poor - are learning more and faster than children who do not watch. But, in general, it has not narrowed the learning gap between so-called advantaged and disadvantaged children. John Merrow spoke with Gerald Lesser, Chairman of the Board of Advisors of the Children's Television Workshop, the group responsible for programs like Sesame Street.

MERROW: Sesame Street was kind of sold to the great mass of people as a way of narrowing the gap, as a way of increasing the skills of disadvantaged kids by implication . . . Maybe you never said "narrowing the gap", but certainly the inference was allowed to be drawn.

LESSER: Actually, Mrs. Cooney who is the head of the Children's Television Workshop at a certain point back in 1968 did make a statement to that effect, which she has been withdrawing and retracting and feeling guilty about ever since - because, really, what was in her mind at the time was not that we would narrow the gap. That really to our minds is a false issue. Rather, instead, can we bring all children - disadvantaged as well as advantaged - up to a minimal level of competency so that when they enter school they can move rapidly and comfortably in school? In that sense, there may be a narrowing the gap interpretation of that because we're not trying to reduce the distance between advantaged and disadvantaged kids. I don't think any single television program . . . I mean, that's a major social issue, and no single kids' show is going to lay a glove on it. We were rather happy that kids learned about the same amount when advantaged and disadvantaged kids were compared, and that the gap isn't being widened.

But what we're really after was trying to teach all kids a certain basic, minimum set of skills - whether they're from advantaged or disadvantaged backgrounds - so they can navigate well in school when they get there.

MERROW: John Ryor, the President of the National Education Association spoke the other day about the effect of television. He wasn't talking specifically about Sesame Street. In fact, he was speaking about commercial TV. But, one of the things he said is that television has taught children that somehow learning is always fun, and that the teacher's job is to entertain. Now, in some way you may be contributing to that problem.

LESSER: Again, I hate to sound sort of complimentary to Sesame Street by everything I say - because, again, there have been criticisms and objections, and some of them are serious and important. But in connection with that particular observation, that doesn't correspond with our own observations. In other words, what we observed instead of the teacher kind of being put on the spot to be as entertaining and amusing as Sesame Street is, is that kids take the television medium as in its own integrity. The classroom does its thing, and television does its think. And they don't generalize. They don't make invidious comparisons. They don't say, "Well, television is amusing. The teacher isn't. Therefore, I'm not going to listen to the teacher." They take each experience in its own right, with its own integrity.

MERROW: You're not saying that there's simply no transfer?

LESSER: We hope there is a transfer. In other words, we hope that the particular skills kids learn through Sesame Street they will use in school. But their expectations - that since television is amusing, then school will be amusing. Since school is something else, television will be like that. No. Kids don't do that. They don't generalize in that way. We hope they do use the skills, and we have some indication that they use the specific skills we're trying to teach them, but their expectations about the two things don't get confused in their minds. They take them in their own right.

We know that there are always going to be certain unintended effects in what we do. We have a particular educational purpose in mind. What the kids see, and the ways kids react to what they see, may be very different from what we had in mind, and we're always trying to be as alert as possible about those unintended consequences so we can change what we do, if we find that some of those unintended consequences are harmful. So, we try as best we can to track all of those, of which this would be one particular instance.

MERROW: The notion of unintended effects - how do you pre-test pieces of Sesame Street to find out what kind of effect is going to happen?

LESSER: Well, it's one of the most difficult problems in research because, by definition, since the effect is unintended, and you don't know what to look for, you don't know where to look for it, right? It could be anywhere. All right. So, basically, what you try to focus on is - What could the harmful effects be? For example, if you have a particular health message, and you're trying to teach a child to avoid a particular health hazard, you're looking to see whether you're teaching a kid to take the medicines out of the chest, or to cross the street in the middle, instead of the opposite - by showing him the consequences of doing it. So, there you have a little guidance as to what the unintended effect might be, and what you've got to be careful about.

The basic notion, though, is to watch kids. In other words, not to guess at those unintended effects out of one's adult mentality because you think you understand this better than the kids do, but watch the kids directly, and see what you can find out from their

observations and their reactions as to what the possible harmful unintended effects might be.

MERROW: So, you have a bunch of kids somewhere who are Sesame Street watchers?

LESSER: Well, we have bunches of kids all over the place who are Sesame Street watchers. We have a group of research people at the Children's Television Workshop who spend all their time watching kids, watching segments we produce to see, first of all, whether we're accomplishing what we set out to accomplish in terms of our particular educational goals, but also watching to see whether we're producing any effects that we didn't want to produce, but are producing anyway. Yes. We have a group of people watching kids either individually in their homes while watching Sesame Street, in small groups in daycare centers and so forth - trying to get directly from the kids' viewing answers to the kinds of questions that you're raising.

MERROW: Our children are continually urging us to come watch with them. Is there any data that indicates kids do better if the parents watch with them?

LESSER: Yeah. That's been, I think, one of the most uniform findings not only in this country, but in other countries as well. And that is when parents do share the young child's viewing-experience, or when the older children in the family share the viewing of the three, four, and five year old child, that the effects on young children are far greater, and benefit that child far more. This doesn't necessarily come by way of the parent actually tutoring the child while the program is on, or the older child actually teaching the child or reinforcing what's happening on Sesame Street - as much as a kind of indirect effect, I think, of the older people in the family sharing the young kid's experience; sort of crediting the young kid with doing something that is interesting enough or important enough to join them in doing.

There's no surprise in that. There are no headlines. That's probably true of anything for a young kid. Anytime a young kid is doing something that the parent or older kids find important enough to participate in, the young kid is going to benefit from that.

MERROW: One last question, professor. Do you have a favorite character on Sesame Street, and, if so, why?

LESSER: Well, no. I think all of the muppets have always been very interesting to me. Kermit, I think, is marvelously indestructible as he goes about trying to deliver his lectures, and being a college professor myself, when I see how Kermit hangs in in the face of all that adversity while delivering his lectures, there's a good lesson in that for me.

(GROVER from SESAME STREET -- "OVER, UNDER, AROUND, & THROUGH")

BLAIR: And with that from Gerald Lesser of The Children's Television Workshop, and some travelin' music from Sesame Street's Grover, we are also through - almost.

MERROW: We'd like to give special thanks to Minneapolis Poet, Keith Gunderson. If you'd like a transcript of his poetry, and the rest of this program, write to us at National Public Radio/Education, Washington, D. C. 20036. Transcripts are 25¢. Cassettes are $4.00. Be sure to ask for Program #25.

CHILD: OPTIONS IN EDUCATION is a co-production with the Institute for Educational Leadership at the George Washington University and National Public Radio.

BLAIR: Principal support for the program is provided by the National Institute of Education.

MERROW: Additional funds to NPR are provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and to IEL by the Carnegie Corporation, the U.S. Office of Education, and the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation.

BLAIR: This program is produced by Midge Hart. The Executive Producer is John Merrow. Associate Producer is Jo Ellyn Rackleff. For OPTIONS IN EDUCATION, I'm Wendy Blair.

(Grover says "So long . . .")

CHILD: This is NPR - National Public Radio.

* * * * *

RESOURCE LIST

Segment

1 Howard Zinn, Boston University
The Southern Mystique, (Publ.: Knopf, 1964)
Politics of History, (Publ.: Beacon Press, 1970)

2 Schooling in Capitalistic America, Samuel Bowles & Herbert Gintis, (Publ.: Basics Books, 1976)

3 Liberal Parents, Radical Children, Midge Decter (Publ.: Coward, 1975)

4 Do Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?, John Powers, (Publ.: Regency)

5 & 7 Poet Keith Gunderson, Professor of Philosophy at University of Minnesota. (Text of poems may be used for non-commercial educational purposes only.)

6 Kids Kitchen Takeover, Sara Bonnett Stein, (Publ.: Workman Publications, 1976)

8 Children & Television: Lessons from Sesame Street, Gerald Lesser, (Publ.: Random House, 1974)